In the Claims:

Please cancel claims 1 to 19 without prejudice and add the following new claims 20 to 40:

Claims 1 to 19 (canceled).

20.(new) A method of encoding reference objects with reference to a traffic route network in a transmitter, transmitting the reference objects in encoded form from the transmitter to a receiver via a transmission system and decoding the reference objects in encoded form in the receiver, wherein said transmitter includes an encoder and a database associated with the encoder, said receiver includes a decoder and a database associated with the decoder and the database in the transmitter differs from the database in the receiver, said method comprising the steps of:

a) encoding a reference object from the database of the transmitter together with relationship information by means of the encoder to generate encoded information, said relationship information comprising location references for the reference object and defining at least one relationship of the reference object to at least one relational object present in the database of the receiver;

b) transmitting the encoded information from the transmitter to the receiver via the transmission system;

c) decoding the relationship information including the location references for the reference object in the decoder to ascertain the at least one relationship of

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the reference object to the at least one relational object already present in the database of the receiver;

d) searching at least a predetermined portion of the database of the receiver to determine if the reference object is already present in the database of the receiver; and

e) storing the reference object in the database of the receiver according to the at least one relationship of the reference object to the at least one relational object determined in the decoding of step c) if the searching of step d) establishes that the reference object is not already present in the database of the receiver.

21.(new) The method as defined in claim 20, further comprising setting up a search window that defines the limits of the searching of the database of the receiver for the reference object.

22.(new) The method as defined in claim 20, wherein the relationship information defines respective plural relationships to corresponding plural relational objects in the database of the receiver.

23.(new) The method as defined in claim 20, wherein the relationship information defines hierarchical relationships to plural relational objects.

24.(new) The method as defined in claim 20, wherein said at least one

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relationship includes at least one logical characteristic.

25.(new) The method as defined in claim 24, wherein said at least one logical characteristic is a membership.

26.(new) The method as defined in claim 20, wherein the relationship information for the reference object has a data structure as follows:

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<reference object>
        <reference/relational object i>,
                <reference/relational object ij >,
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wherein i is an integer from 1 to N and j, independently of i, is an integer from 1 to N for each i and at least the reference object and one relationship object are present.

27.(new) The method as defined in claim 26, wherein said

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<reference/relational object i> =

        <plane>
        <object type>
        <object coordinates><object end> for every i in said data structure.
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28.(new) The method as defined in claim 27, wherein the data structure is supplemented with additional information including information entities for outputting the reference object.

29.(new) The method as defined in claim 20, wherein the relationship information for the reference object includes data identifying a decoding rule associated with

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the reference information for the reference object.

30.(new) The method as defined in claim 20, further comprising searching for the at least one relational object in the database of the receiver and wherein the decoding of the relationship information including the location references for the reference object occurs after the searching.

31.(new) The method as defined in claim 30, further comprising opening search windows around the reference object and the at least one relational object.

32.(new) The method as defined in claim 30, further comprising providing an additional database associated with the decoder in the receiver and searching the additional database when the at least one relational object is not found in the database in the receiver during the searching of the database in the receiver.

33.(new) The method as defined in claim 20, wherein the relationship information includes at least one position indication of the reference object and said at least one position indication is provided with a position type designator.

34.(new) The method as defined in claim 33, wherein the position type designator indicates whether the at least one position indication pertains to an exact position and/or indicates a location of a search space for a position or an object.

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35.(new) The method as defined in claim 33, wherein the position type designator designates a type of only a single associated position indication.

36.(new) The method as defined in claim 33, wherein the position type designator designates a type of a plurality of associated position indications.

37.(new) The method as defined in claim 33, wherein the position type designator has at least one attribute designating further properties of the at least one position indication.

38.(new) The method as defined in claim 37, wherein said further properties include an error radius of the at least one position indication.

39.(new) The method as defined in claim 37, wherein the at least one attribute indicates whether the at least one position indication is absolute or relative.

40.(new) The method as defined in claim 37, wherein the position type designator indicates whether a transmitted position is a navigable position or is a location in search space.

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